



News Release

For immediate release: August 5, 2010

(10-124-revised)

This document has been revised.

Contacts: Linda Furkay, Adverse Events Program
Allison Cook, Communications Office

360-236-2875
360-236-4022

Adverse events and medical errors reported in the state are now online

New database helps track and prevent these errors

OLYMPIA — Information on adverse events and medical errors in Washington hospitals and facilities is now online. A new Department of Health website has information for consumers and health care providers on medical errors and adverse events — and ways to prevent them.

These errors, known as adverse events, are reported by medical facilities and tracked by the state health department to improve patient safety and care at hospitals and facilities across the state.

“Patient safety is our priority, and this information is a helpful tool,” said Secretary of Health Mary Selecky. “It helps facilities spot problems and find solutions to improve patient safety.”

Under state law, hospitals and medical facilities are required to report 28 types of errors that are considered “serious reportable events” by the National Quality Forum. The forum is a non-profit group devoted to health care quality measurement and reporting. The new website lists [adverse event reports](http://www.doh.wa.gov/hsqa/adverseevents) by facility name and by date (www.doh.wa.gov/hsqa/adverseevents).

From June 2006 through March 2010, the agency received reports of 780 adverse events in Washington facilities. Of these events, 402 were pressure ulcers, also known as bed sores. There were also 228 surgical events, 75 falls, and 20 medication errors. The data set is not intended for direct hospital comparisons, but it’s already being used to improve hospital systems. The reporting data reflects the work of some hospitals to reduce the number of pressure ulcers.

Since July 2009 health care facilities have been asked to respond to a check-in survey. The survey was developed jointly with the Washington State Hospital Association and the Patient Safety Adverse Event Advisory Committee. It reminds hospitals and other facilities of the adverse event reporting requirement. The agency sends facilities a quarterly online survey that prompts them to respond even if there were no confirmed adverse events in the previous quarter.

—More—

The most recent survey had response rates of 100 percent (93) hospitals, 100 percent (3) psychiatric hospitals, 100 percent (12) child birth centers, 100 percent (7) correctional medical facilities, and 80 percent (161) ambulatory surgery facilities. The results of these quarterly surveys can be found in the [Adverse Event Facility by Quarter report](http://www.doh.wa.gov/hsqa/adverseevents/Files/QRQuarter.pdf) (www.doh.wa.gov/hsqa/adverseevents/Files/QRQuarter.pdf).

The new Web tool also has frequently asked questions on adverse events; links to health resources for consumers; and information and resources to help medical facilities report, analyze, and find ways to avoid adverse events.

###

Visit the Washington Department of Health website at <http://www.doh.wa.gov> for *a healthy dose of information*.